

Scientific Sagre

The Exploits of a New Kind of Detective

By Francis Lynde

CHAPTER VI.

The Invasion.

"DIMMOCK and Carmody are in charge," he concluded, "and before night they will have tried and executed everybody in the service whose head sticks up far enough to give them an excuse for cutting it off. They are going to make a clean sweep. Dimmock practically admitted it. By this time to-morrow the Nevada Short Line will be part and parcel of the Transcontinental system with only T-C men in charge."

"Holy Smoke!" said Kendall, and the conclusion from him meant more than the most frenzied outburst of the average man; and then again he said "Holy Smoke!"

It was Starbuck, himself a small stockholder in the confiscated railroad, who first got his feet upon the solid earth again.

"I reckon we all are just going to sit around and bite our thumbs and let these holdups put it all over us," he said in his slow drawl; adding, after the proper pause: "I don't think!"

Maxwell sprang out of his chair. "I must go to the commercial office and wire Ford!" he broke out. "He'll know what to do if there is anything that can be done. Stillings, you get in touch with our general counsel in Chicago. We're an interstate road and this thing can't be settled in a Timanyoni County court."

"Hold on," said Stillings. "That is where we're lame. We allowed ourselves to be used in this case, as we have in a good many others under the old corporate name—The Red Butte Western. That, as you know, was a purely stratagem corporation. Our newer lines are only 'extras'."

"Then we can't carry it up to the Federal courts," gasped Maxwell. "We can't try it, of course, but we can try it. But the presumptive facts are against us. What I am hoping is that our Pacific Southwestern backers will be as many as ours in a killing and dump these pirates at the regular hearing."

"Then you needn't hope any more," said Sprague quietly. "Apart from the fact that you have as many more times over to-day, the element of time comes in to cut the largest figure. For the stock-smashing purposes in this particular instance, short receivership will prove as efficacious as a long one. You've had experience with the steam roller to-day, and you have as many more of them as may seem necessary. It wouldn't make any difference if you should import a trainload of Eastern lawyers, the thing's done, and it's a matter of staying down until it has accomplished the end in view—which is to transfer the stock control of the Short Line to strike back and strike quickly—before the mischief is done in New York."

"But how?" pleaded Stillings. "Tell us how!"

"By proving clearly what I presume we all accept as the undoubted fact that Judge Watson has been held."

True to his calling, Stillings was the first to object to so sweeping a charge.

"Oh, hold on!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't go so far as that. That is a pretty serious charge, Sprague."

"I know it is. But when I say bribery it doesn't necessarily mean the money form of buying with cash money. Let us say that Judge Watson has been 'influenced.' If you can't make that charge stick, then you may as well call the incident 'closed.'"

Maxwell was leaning against the door jamb. His eyes were fiery and his breath coming quickly.

"If you say there has been crooked work, Calvin, that settles it; I believe it. Now tell us what to do and we'll do it."

Maxwell's lean, leathery jaw was set hard and he was furtively watching the big expert. That a fierce struggle of some kind was going on behind the mask of the ruddy, half-beyish face he made no doubt. And Sprague's answer quickly confirmed the editor's conclusion.

CHAPTER VII.

The Girl.

"YOU don't know what you're asking, Dick," said the big man slowly.

"I do!" said Maxwell hotly. "I'm asking you to help us send a bunch of criminals to jail—down, ordinary thieving criminals—to jail Sprague, if you can do it, and won't do it!"

There was a strained silence in the shabby little law office that seemed as if it would never be broken. Kendall turned his face away, and Starbuck slid noiselessly out of his chair and went to stand at the window with his back to the others. At length the reply to Maxwell's demand came, wrung out, as it seemed, from the very heart of reluctance.

"It can be done. Every chain that was ever forged has its weak link. For reasons which are purely personal to me, I'd rather be shot than go into this thing with you. I'd rather be in any event, I may fall down on you when it comes to the pinch. But I'll go as far as I can. Will that do?"

"Say it!" snapped the ex-superintendent eagerly.

"All right. Stillings, you may come

to my room in the hotel at 8 o'clock and bring Mr. David Kinzie, our downtown bank President, with you if you have to climb him to do it. I don't care who he is, but he must be just as little as possible of this railroad grab in your news columns for the present, taking my word for it that you shall have the biggest story of the century for the Nevada Short Line. You'll come over to the hotel with me now, and I'll give you your stunt. That's all; the meeting's adjourned."

To think that the little intermountain city was stirred to the depths by the news which quickly spread from tip to tip in putting it mildly. In its beginnings, however, had been a railroad story in the strictest sense, owing to its location and its phenomenal aftergrowth largely to the fostering policy of the railroad. Under Maxwell's wise and just management, the Nevada Short Line had identified itself very closely with the growth and prosperity of the entire intermountain region, as it had stood as a shining example of a "good" corporation. To have the popular management swept ruthlessly aside and the rule of another company, operating under the this mask of a receiver, set up in its place, provoked a storm of indignant protest.

Moreover, many of the well-to-do citizens of the Timanyoni were stockholders in the Short Line, and upon these the blow fell as a disaster. Prominent among these local stockholders stood the owner of the Kinzie Building, Brewster, one multi-millionaire and the President of the Brewster National Bank. At precisely 2 o'clock David Kinzie, gray and pale, with his small, ferret-like nose, peering shrewdly from under the rim of the soft gray hat which he always wore with Stillings. It had not even been necessary for the attorney to bludgeon him to induce him to come to the conference with Sprague.

What went on behind the locked door of room 403 after the two had been admitted was a secret that was not shared with any fourth party, though one of Editor Kendall's young men promptly waylaid Stillings at the door.

"Tell Mr. Kendall he shall have the news, and have it first, when there is any," was all the lawyer would say; but Connabel, the star reporter who had done the waylaying, said later:

"Give me a hint, Mr. Stillings—just the barest shadow of a hint," he begged. "Will the case be taken to the Federal courts?"

"Not for publication, Fred," laughed the lawyer, who was evidently in better spirits. Then he added: "There's a big story in this, my boy, and you shall have it when the ripe; I'll promise you that—I'll ask Kendall to detail you. And that is positively all you'll get out of me now."

Fifteen minutes after the lawyer and Mr. Kinzie had left room 403 the door opened again, this time to admit Starbuck.

"Well," said the big-bodied expert when Maxwell's brother-in-law had taken the chair recently vacated by the banker.

"The judge is sick, or playing sick," was the answer. "Doc Mangum has just gone out to the house, and the servants have their orders to admit nobody."

"What is the nature of his sickness, yes anybody know that?"

"Oh, yes; it's heart trouble and too much altitude. He's had it before."

"Billey, does it occur to you that this is a most opportune time for him to be taken sick again? What do they do for him? Do they have heart trouble in this country?"

"Order 'em down to a lower altitude," said the mine owner.

"Exactly," said Maxwell, and that was the doctor Mangum will advise in the present case. When he does so, Judge Watson will go."

Starbuck was deftly rolling a cigarette. "And then what?" he queried.

"Then the regular hearing, which is set for the twelfth of the month. Sprague will have the case on, and receivership will hold over until it is either confirmed or set aside by the higher courts. In the meantime the delay will have accomplished its purpose. The New York bank pool of the stock will be broken, the T-C people will buy it in, and the rail will be driven and clinched."

"You're not going to let Judge Watson get out of town," he predicted. "I can ride up the trail that far without falling off a cliff."

"No," said Sprague. "We are not going to let him get away until we are through with him. Did you make the other arrangement I spoke of?"

"I sure did. If you want to, I'll fool enough to let the cat out of the bag, we'll get the cat. Tarbell's on that part of the job."

Why Not?

I WANT A BATHING SUIT AND A PAIR OF SNEAKERS

ISN'T IT HOT

SAY, YOU CAN'T DO THAT

WHY NOT DURING THE HOT SPELL?

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NEXT WEEK'S COMPLETE NOVEL IN THE EVENING WORLD

Jacqueline of Golden River

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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